

Remarks by Lt. Governor Becky Skillman to the National Association of Defense Communities gathering, Indianapolis 8/01/06

INTRODUCTION

Good morning and welcome to the great state of Indiana and our beautiful capital city. I hope you have the chance to explore the city and enjoy some Hoosier hospitality while you are here.

It is a pleasure for me to be here among people who truly appreciate the role defense installations play in communities across the nation. We are kindred spirits in this room. Yesterday, you honored my partner, Governor Mitch Daniels, for his leadership in saving the Crane military installation from closure last year, and for his efforts to capitalize on the economic potential of Indiana's military assets for the benefit of the state's residents.

We are busy rewriting the story of Indiana's defense installations and defense communities. The story is one of success, and one I'd like to share with you today.

BRAC

I will start at the beginning, with BRAC 2005, mentioned yesterday. The Governor and I assumed office in January 2005, and it was necessary to hit the ground running. In the 2005 round, as some of you know, Indiana faced the possibility that Naval Support Activity Crane would be closed. The State was all too familiar with the devastating impact of BRAC closures, since the four previous BRACs had closed all active military bases in Indiana, EXCEPT for Crane.

I grew up not far from Crane, the base is within part of my home county, and I represented the area for 12 years in the Indiana Senate, so I know firsthand the economic impact it has on an area of the state that most needs jobs. Crane contributes \$1.3 million a day to Indiana, employs almost 4,000 residents from more than seven counties, and attracts and retains skilled, educated workers to an area that, historically, has been economically depressed. Closing Crane would devastate the area.

The Governor and I knew that saving Crane was critical to building a strong, stable state economy. We laid out and executed an ambitious plan to keep it open for business. I spent many days in the halls of the Pentagon, as well as the Governor, arguing the case for Crane. Many of you are familiar with this activity. I was joined by private business owners and elected officials from the area. This public-private partnership was successful. Thanks to our joint efforts, Crane remained open. In addition, the state actually gained 1,000 new jobs in the Defense Finance and Accounting Service at Indianapolis and Fort Benjamin Harrison.

One of the keys to this dramatic turnaround was the creation of long-term plans to develop and expand all of Indiana's military assets. These plans included:

- the creation of the Indiana Office of Energy and Defense Development,
- the development of the Military Base Planning Council,

- the signing of the Military Base Protection Act, and
- the approval of The Westgate @ Crane technology park.

OED

The Governor and I, with the help of the General Assembly, created the Office of Energy and Defense Development. Under the Lt. Governor, this office is charged with strengthening the defense community, both public and private, in our state. We have linked our energy and military initiatives as part of an innovative strategy to locate alternative energy projects at current or former military installations.

Our new office will capitalize on the state's military assets, for energy or other projects, creating huge economic development opportunities for our communities. And, it will help position our state as a cutting-edge military and training hub for the nation.

MILITARY BASE PLANNING COUNCIL

The Military Base Planning Council, which I chair, was initially conceived as part of the strategy to protect Crane during BRAC. It was designed to bring together State and local resources on behalf of the base.

Our immediate goal in establishing the Council was:

- first, to increase Crane's military value
- to prevent encroachment of the Crane mission
- to ensure that Crane had a good working relationship with IDEM for environmental permit requests, and
- to address any concerns from the surrounding communities.

More importantly, as we look ahead, this council will address the continuing needs and opportunities that surround Crane—both in expanding the base's military value to the nation, and in expanding its economic value to the surrounding region and to our state.

Even before the Council's first meeting, we had interest in replicating this effort for some of Indiana's other military assets. Many people saw the value in the partnership between state and local leaders, and the need for a concentrated focus on economic development opportunities.

THE WESTGATE @ CRANE

One way we are capitalizing on the state's military assets is the West Gate @ Crane Technology Park. The state's only tri-county technology park, the West Gate lies in adjoining areas of Daviess, Greene and Martin counties. It was certified by the Indiana Economic Development Corporation (IEDC) earlier this year, which allows tax incentives to businesses who locate there.

The park is being developed by county and economic development commissions from the three counties. We expect it to eventually become a 1,000 acre technology region that will revitalize the entire area's economy.

State-of-the-art facilities are now in development and will serve major commercial technology companies associated with the \$2 billion Crane military technical center. Facilities are also being designed for academic and training operations, with expected involvement from the University of Indianapolis, Purdue University, Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology, and other Indiana institutions of higher learning.

Just two weeks ago West Gate announced construction of the parks' third facility, so the park is well on its way to success.

OTHER SUCCESSES

CAMP ATTERBURY

In addition to the Crane region, Indiana is finding new economic development opportunities at other military installations as well. Our Camp Atterbury, activated as a World War II training facility in 1942, today prepares thousands of troops for deployment in the war on terror. And it provides millions of dollars in economic impact to the state.

Since 9/11 over 30,000 troops have been mobilized, trained and deployed for duty in Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere. I am proud we have such a training center here in the state. And, we can't ignore its enormous economic impact on South Central Indiana. Camp Atterbury contributes millions to the local community each year—from laundry services, to food services, to the local seamstress who is kept busy sewing patches on military uniforms—jobs are created by the presence of this facility.

In the past five years, Camp Atterbury's budget has grown from \$9 million to \$50 million. But, the real excitement is in the camp's evolution into the National Training Center, made possible by the acquisition of the Muscatatuck State Developmental Center.

MUSCATATUCK

When Muscatatuck Developmental Center, a state institution, closed its doors, General Umbarger, the Adjutant General of the Indiana Army and Air National Guard, and his team had a vision to NOT let the multi-million dollar facility go to waste. They have worked hard to turn Muscatatuck, that small city, into the premier urban training center of the nation.

As Chair of the Counter Terrorism (C-TASC), and Security Council for our state, I have a particular interest in the potential of Muscatatuck for helping prepare our military to respond to terrorist attacks—at home or abroad. Today's war has changed all of us, and public servants at every level of government spend an extraordinary amount of time on matters of our personal security. The terrorist attacks in London and Spain and the attacks on our homeland in September 2001, reinforce the reality that 'war' no longer happens only in far away lands.

The enemy of today knows no borders and no limit. They will strike where our citizens live and work. To train for this, we need facilities that simulate an urban setting. The Muscatatuck Training Center is critical in our readiness to effectively fight the modern war.

Muscatatuck's new mission cannot be achieved unless we have coordination, and this urban warfare-training center is the epitome of collaboration. I am pleased that Camp Atterbury, Crane Naval Warfare Center, Purdue University, CTASC... and many others have come together to make this a premier facility.

When the training center is fully operational, as many as four thousand people a month could travel there for training, generating an estimated \$176 million a year for the local economy. This is a great use of a prime Indiana resource that will benefit our troops, our nation and our state. It is a win for all involved, and we hope to have similar successes at Indiana's other military installations.

CONCLUSION

As you can see, Indiana has come a long way, from having our last active military installation on the BRAC closure list, to forming strong public-private partnerships, to retain and GROW our military and defense assets. I hope I have provided some insight into Indiana's unique approaches to the challenges defense communities face, as well as some of our success stories.

Again, it has been our pleasure to host you in our capital city. I'm confident that all of you will keep up the good work.